

# COLLINS CENTER UPDATE

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### **Strategic Decision Making Exercise (SDME) 2012**

*Colonel Rick Schwartz*

*Director, USAWC Support Branch, CSL*

The U.S. Army War College Resident Class of 2012 recently completed their annual Strategic Decision Making Exercise (SDME) where they were immersed in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world of the year 2025. This year's SDME took place in the Center for Strategic Leadership's (CSL) Collins Hall during the period of 29 Feb – 7 Mar, 2012.

This faculty-led, political-military decision-making exercise is designed as a capstone event which provides students the opportunity to role-play as strategic leaders and staffs through the integration and application of the knowledge acquired during the USAWC core curriculum. SDME is a joint and multinational exercise that includes political and military play at the high operational and strategic levels. The exercise is supported by appropriate information technology tools and models – in which students are required to apply service and joint doctrine within the framework of the interagency, military contingency planning and execution, military resourcing, and multinational coordination processes. While considering multiple scenarios, students must develop strategic policy recommendations for employing the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of national power. The setting spans each Geographic Combatant Command's (GCC's) area of responsibility, and includes major operations, lesser contingencies, stability operations, global terrorism, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

During the exercise, students fulfill roles within selected elements of the interagency community at the strategic level, which include the Deputy National Security Advisor, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and the Deputy Secretary for Homeland Security. In addition, students assume key military positions across the Joint, the Services, and the GCCs. Students engage in interagency policy and deputies committee meetings to formulate and implement national security policy that involves the use of all elements of national power.

Special learning events are a key component of the SDME. These events enhance exercise realism and provide quality experiential learning opportunities. SDME 2012 included 28 distinguished visitor visits (from selected flag officers or civilian equivalents who served as senior role-players and provided direct interaction with the students), 133 short notice interviews, 24 media briefings, 8 congressional testimony sessions (3 sessions conducted via VTC with actual US Representatives and 5 conducted with Congressional staffers role-playing Congressmen), 42 bilateral negotiation sessions enabled by the USAWC's International Fellows, 23 VTCs with students' real-world U.S. GCC counterparts, 20 strategic resourcing meetings, and numerous coalition briefings. One hour in-cell After Action Reviews (AARs) were also conducted on a daily basis and the exercise concluded with twenty separate three-hour in-seminar AARs conducted by the USAWC Faculty Instructors with the students, as well as separate controller AARs.

The preparation and execution of SDME 2012 was spearheaded by CSL's

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Army War College Support Branch. The branch created the varying scenarios for each GCC, coordinated distinguished visitor and subject matter expert participation, and conducted various administrative support coordination – to include the facility and network setup, providing training to support personnel, publishing handbooks and other exercise-related materials, and post-wide coordination for the event. The USAWC faculty provided majority of the Observer Controllers for each student organization.

In summary, the SDME's primary focus is on the achievement of student learning – in direct support of the USAWC's Institutional Learning Objectives. SDME is a world-class exercise designed to develop agile strategic leaders who are capable of successfully operating in challenging future interagency, inter-governmental and multinational settings. It directly challenges the students to apply the knowledge they had gained in the first seven months of their studies. Most importantly, it requires them to depart from the relative 'comfort zone' of dealing with operational and tactical issues and instead focus their efforts at the strategic levels where they must anticipate the consequences of actions – including unforeseen residual effects.

— **CSL** —

## **The Romanian Armed Forces and Joint Staff Planning**

**Professor B.F. Griffard**

*Operations and Gaming Division, CSL*

An active contributing member of NATO, Romania was part of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), it has been a member of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)–Afghanistan since 2002, and they participated in the Naval Blockade of Libya in 2011. As they planned and executed these missions, what proved especially challenging was the handoff between the deliberate, long-term planners of the J5, and the operational planners and executors of the

J3 staff. This transfer of responsibility is situational and requires close coordination throughout the procedure.

Desiring to improve this process internally, prior to beginning the detailed planning for the phased draw down of Romanian forces in Afghanistan, the Romanian Armed Forces General Staff requested a traveling contact team (TCT) from the Commander, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) that could meet with their J3/J5 planners and discuss:

- National Operations Planning Procedures
- Operations Planning Procedures at the National Level Related to Participation in a NATO Operation
- Knowledge Development/ Management in Support of Operations Planning
- Regulations, Structures, & Procedures
- Political-Military Interface, Common Structures and Activities Specific to Operations Planning

In support of this USEUCOM theater security cooperation initiatives, the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) provided a three-man team composed of Colonel Charles Van Bebber, Department of National Security & Strategy; Dr. Paul Jussel, Department of Military Strategy, Planning & Operations; and, Professor Bernard Griffard, Center for Strategic Leadership. The workshop was conducted 13-15 March 2012 at the Romanian National Defence University. Using U.S. operational planning methods and processes as a start point, the USAWC team facilitated discussions with Romanian J3 and J5 personnel focused on the interaction between future and current operations.

Throughout there was rich conversation about J3 and J5 coordination. The participants desire to better understand the relationship of future planning to current operations, and the actual coordination of future planning, to future operations, to current operations energized the discussions throughout. Also

emphasized was the necessity of education in processes and selecting the right people to work the processes. Currently, the Romanian General Staff is testing an organizational concept designed to ensure that all stakeholders in the planning process stay abreast of ongoing requirements.

This event once again highlighted the USAWC's unique capability to assist the geographic combatant commands (GCCs) and their Army Components in building strategic and operational planning and coordination skills with the nations in their areas of responsibility. Participation in these events increases the visibility of the USAWC, and provides faculty members with the opportunity to maintain currency in their regional specialties. The perspectives gained during this visit were immediately shared with students through the Regional Studies elective. For these reasons the USAWC will continue to seek opportunities to support GCC theater security cooperation initiatives.

— **CSL** —

## **The Senior Leader Seminar (SLS): Senior Leader Development Course 12-1**

**Profs Alan G. Bourque & Eugene L. Thompson**

*Operations and Gaming Division, CSL*

The Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL), U.S. Army War College (USAWC), built upon the success of its SLS Pilot course, conducted in August 2011, by successfully enhancing and presenting SLS 12-1. CSL executed SLS 12-1 at a new venue, the OPM Eastern Management Development Center (EMDC), Shepherdstown, West Virginia from 8 through 13 January 2012.

Conducted using resources from all of the War College, SLS 12-1 incorporated lessons learned from the conduct of the SLS Pilot Course, refined guidance from General Robert Cone, Commander, TRADOC, and additional direction by



General Ray Odierno, the 38th Army Chief of Staff.

A total of 89 Army leaders attended the course – 70 colonels (58 ACC, 6 USAR and 6 ARNG) and 19 DA civilians (GS15). These selected leaders were either recently assigned to or designated for assignment to key positions as advisors or staff officers for general officers or senior civilian leaders.

The primary objective of the SLS program is to help achieve Army Leader Development Strategy Imperative 8, “Prepare select leaders for service at the National level.” SLS provides a broadening educational experience, for these select Army leaders, giving an opportunity for a two way interchange. It promotes understanding of the Army’s strategic messages, goals and objectives and enlists their efforts to promote or accomplish them. SLS also provides an opportunity for participants to raise issues and concerns to TRADOC and Army leadership, while providing a venue to network and establish, or expand relationships with one another.

SLS employs an adult education model to achieve its goals and learning objectives. The program includes presentations in plenary sessions by Army senior leaders and noted subject matter experts (practitioners, academics and commentators) with question and answer periods.

Following these sessions, members of the USAWC Staff and Faculty facilitate Small Group (13-16 participants) discussions to enhance and expand upon the material presented by the subject matter

experts. Additionally, select members of the USAWC Staff and Faculty provide optional supplementary material during noon time lectures.

Daily, Lieutenant General (Ret) Barno, the SLS Senior Facilitator, provided preparatory guidance and direction to pique interest and engage critical thinking about the day’s program. He also provided observations and insights, based on his senior leader experience, leavening the previous day’s discourse across Small Groups. The Senior Facilitator also assisted in facilitating immediate and long term modification of the program to achieve its goals and objectives.

Participant response to SLS 12-1 was overwhelmingly positive, surpassing the accomplishments of the SLS Pilot by a wide margin. Almost 81% of course participants responded to the broad-based end of course survey. In response to a query of the course’s value and overall satisfaction with it, respondents “strongly agreed” that the SLS program should continue.

One respondent expressed enthusiastically that, “This has been a tremendous growing opportunity and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been selected to attend this seminar; great effort, and the [US]AWC staff & faculty are obviously very dedicated and passionate about growing the Army’s strategic leaders. Thank You!”

GEN Cone, approved recommendations by the USAWC to execute two SLS courses in FY12 and the transition of SLS from an Army Leader Development Program (ALDP) Initiative

to a Program of Record. Currently CSL expects to conduct SLS 12-2 at the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown West Virginia from 19 to 24 August 2012.

— CSL —

## Teaching Strategy at the Baltic Defense College

**Professor John (Jef) Troxell**

*Operations and Gaming Division, CSL*

A key tenant of the recently published U.S. defense guidance (*Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense*) is building partnership capacity. Previous strategic documents have also stressed the importance of activities designed to enhance the professionalization of partner military forces, and former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in a Foreign Affairs article entitled “Helping Others Defend Themselves,” further elaborated on this concept by emphasizing the importance of building the institutional capacity or human capital of partner nations. One area in which partnership capacity building should be focused is in providing assistance to partner and allied professional military education (PME) programs. For more than seven years the U.S. Army War College has supported the academic program of the Baltic Defense College, located in Tartu, Estonia. The support has been provided to the Higher Command Studies Course (HCSC), Strategy Formulation module. The HCSC is similar in purpose to the program of the U.S. Army War College with the “aim to prepare military and civilian defense officials, at NATO OF-4/5 level or equivalent (U.S. 05-06 equivalent), to be ready to initiate, lead, and implement transformation in the defense institutions of their own states, NATO and the EU in the context of current and future military operations.” Two faculty members from the Army War College, Dr. Marybeth Ulrich and COL(R) Jef Troxell, have supported this PME program by serving as guest lecturer and visiting senior mentors.



**General Odierno speaks with participants about their selection for SLS, Army Issues and Direction**

The most recent assistance visit was conducted in October 2011. The 2011 HCSC consisted of 16 students from 8 different countries: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and the United Kingdom.

The aim of the strategy formulation module is “to explore the principles of strategy formulation and its application within international organizations and individual states.” The module is built on the foundation of the U.S. Army War College ends, ways, means and strategy formulation models and consists of foundation lectures, a practical exercise, strategy briefings from various guest speakers, and a team research project. Foundational lectures included “*What is Strategy I?: Ends, Ways, Means Model and other Concepts*,” and “*What is Strategy II?: Factors, Actors, and Constraints*.” These lectures cover such topics as defining strategy, the strategic thought process, grand strategy and strategic vision, the strategy formulation model and the strategic environment. Case studies are used throughout these presentations. This year’s instruction featured a newly developed mini-case study: Use of Force in Libya.

To ensure understanding and begin to develop skills in thinking strategically and formulating strategies, students are divided into groups and tasked to develop an ends, ways, means assessment

of a recent strategic event. Over the past several years these practical exercises have included an assessment of the ISAF mission to Afghanistan, an analysis of the strategic situation created by the Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and most recently a strategic assessment of a hypothetical situation created by a potential Russian response to a future election crisis in Belarus. Student working groups approach these strategic issues from different national perspectives and are required to apply the strategy formulation process in conjunction with a high level review of the exercise scenario. The strategic review and assessment focus on two issues: articulation of the ends, ways, and means at the strategic level, and consideration of how all of the instruments of power (DIME) contribute to the furtherance of national interests. The assessment must reconcile ends and means with acceptable risk.

Students are also presented with a series of lectures that provide various national perspectives on the development of national security strategy. In addition to a detailed review and discussion of U.S. security strategy, other recent national perspectives have included Russia, Sweden, China, Denmark and presentations from the Baltic countries. The final step in this module is the represented by the Team Research Project, in which students are once again

divided into several working groups to apply the strategy formulation model to develop a comprehensive national-level security strategy. This year the students developed national strategies for Finland, Serbia, Ukraine, and Latvia.

The mission to build partnership capacity through professional military education programs fits ideally within the expertise and vision of the Army War College to be viewed as the most prestigious institution for the education of strategic leaders. These efforts not only provide support to an academic program of an associated NATO educational institute, but similar efforts can be tailored to support the theater security cooperation plans of the various Combatant Commanders. Strategy formulation is one of the bread and butter topics that epitomize the education of strategic leaders at U.S. Army War College. The strategy formulation module developed for the Baltic Defense College can serve as an exportable package for numerous missions that the college conducts in support of geographic combatant commands. A series of foundational briefings on ends, ways, means, and the strategy formulation model; U.S. national security strategy viewed through these lenses; a relevant practical exercise; and, if time permits, a more in depth strategy development task.

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